

## **B.2 York Region Seniors Strategy – Community and Stakeholder Consultation Results**

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# York Region Seniors Strategy – Community and Stakeholder Consultation Summary Presentation to: Seniors Strategy Advisory Task Force

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# Agenda

- Consultation Purpose and Objectives
- Consultation Approach
- What We Heard
- Discussion



# Consultation Purpose and Objectives

- Inform stakeholders and community members about the current direction of the York Region Seniors Strategy;
- Obtain feedback on services and programs currently offered in York Region that are working well;
- Learn about the current and future needs of seniors living in York Region;
- Obtain feedback on areas where the Region can play a role in supporting and serving seniors; and
- Identify opportunities for improved alignment and/or collaboration between York Region and other service providers.



# Consultation Approach

Five community consultation sessions and two stakeholder consultation sessions were held as part of the Seniors Strategy development process:



## Community Sessions

A total of **99** seniors participated in five sessions held in with in East Gwillimbury, Markham, Vaughan, Richmond Hill and Georgina.



## Stakeholder Sessions

A total of **42** key stakeholders participated in 2 sessions held at the Region's offices in Newmarket.

# What We Heard - Finances



Broad Policy  
and Finances

- More education and training is needed to increase financial literacy and management.
- Community members and stakeholders expressed cautious support in principle to transition to a service model based on the ability to pay across all ages.

# What We Heard – Finances



Broad Policy  
and Finances

- Stakeholders recommended developing a communications campaign to help communicate the ability to pay concept, that:
  - Highlights the benefits
  - Identifies audience specific information needs
  - Reduces the stigma associated with aging
  - Ensures language needs are being met

# What We Heard – Health Care



Health Care

- Key issues impacting seniors health:
  - Access to affordable healthy foods and more knowledge of healthy eating is needed
  - Limited knowledge about health and effects of aging
  - Need to revise eligibility criteria for services that provide in-home support or assistance with medication
  - Limited transportation options in areas of York Region
  - Many existing programs and services have waitlists for service or caps on number of hours available



# What We Heard – Health Care



Health Care

Suggested actions to improve access to health care services and programs:

- Support an increase in the range of health-related educational programs and activities offered to seniors.
- Encourage service providers to revise eligibility criteria for programs and services so more seniors can access them.
- Advocate for increased options for caregiver relief.
- Ensure health care providers and other professionals (e.g., physicians, social workers, etc.) are aware of the programs and services available for seniors.

# What We Heard – Health Care



Health Care

Suggested actions continued:

- Advocate for a more holistic and comprehensive approach to seniors' health care (e.g., integrated case management, family health teams).
- Increase resources and facilities to address the complex health care needs of seniors or their dependents (e.g., mental health support, group homes, respite care).
- Advocate for the development of a national dementia strategy.

# What We Heard – Aging in Place



Housing and  
Transportation

Affordable housing and transportation were highlighted as two important areas that impact the ability of seniors to age in place.

# What We Heard – Aging in Place



Housing and  
Transportation

Suggested actions to help seniors age in place:

- Support the development of more housing for seniors through Regional and municipal Official Plan policies and zoning bylaws.
- Continue to ensure Regional and municipal land use planning policies encourage the development of complete and walkable communities.
- Ensure public spaces are designed to be inclusive and accessible for all ages and abilities.
- Explore private-public partnerships to increase the range of housing options for seniors.

# What We Heard – Aging in Place



Housing and  
Transportation

Suggested actions continued:

- Review eligibility requirements for services and programs so more seniors can get the assistance they need.
- Advocate for increased in-home support for seniors, particularly those who live alone without external support.
- Enhance existing public transit services.
- Enhance communication and outreach efforts to increase awareness and communicate eligibility criteria for programs and services to help seniors age in place.

# What We Heard – Staying Connected to the Community



Staying Safe  
and Connected

Several cross-cutting issues impact the ability of seniors to stay connected to the community, including:

- Lack of public space for social interaction, and
- General lack of awareness about programs and services.

# What We Heard – Staying Connected to the Community



Staying Safe  
and Connected

Suggested actions to help seniors stay connected:

- Co-locating programs and services for seniors at community spaces seniors already visit, or hubs.
- Increase access to venue space for seniors and service providers.
- Expand or develop new seniors' centres.
- Advocate for the design of local recreational programs to be inter-generational.
- Facilitate opportunities for intergenerational connections between seniors and youth to support each other through paid or volunteer services.

# What We Heard – Staying Connected to the Community



Staying Safe  
and Connected

Suggested actions continued:

- Explore mechanisms to encourage community members to volunteer with seniors.
- Develop a pilot program in partnership with community centres to create community gardens.
- Facilitate a cultural shift to support an institutionalized perception of seniors as valuable members of society with multiple skills, knowledge and expertise.
- Reduce the stigma associated with aging and asking for help.
- Foster and encourage collaboration between existing organizations and centres that support seniors (i.e., incentives, information sharing).



## What We Heard – Overarching Key Themes

- A broader range of affordable housing options is needed to help seniors age in place.
- More accessible and reliable public transit options are also needed to help seniors age in place, particularly in rural areas.
- There needs to be broader awareness of services and improve system navigation.
- When developing new communities, plan for community gathering spaces.
- Encourage intergenerational connections.
- Advocate for and support a cultural shift that values seniors as active members of society.
- Partnerships across all levels of government and community groups can be leveraged and expanded.

# Recommended Directions

- Enhance land use planning policies that support a variety of housing options that are affordable and accessible.
- Enhance existing public transit services, particularly in rural areas.
- Co-locate programs and services in community spaces seniors already visit (e.g., community centres, schools, places of worship, libraries, etc.) to bring service providers together and increase access to services they offer.
- Enhance communication and outreach activities through existing channels (e.g., social networks, local newspapers, websites, e-blasts, etc.) to broaden awareness and improve system navigation.

# Discussion



# Thank You!

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